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WORK
PLACES

THE
OKLAHOMAN

2020

The Oklahoman has partnered with Philadelphia-based
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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2019

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Oklahoma's TOP WORKPLACES

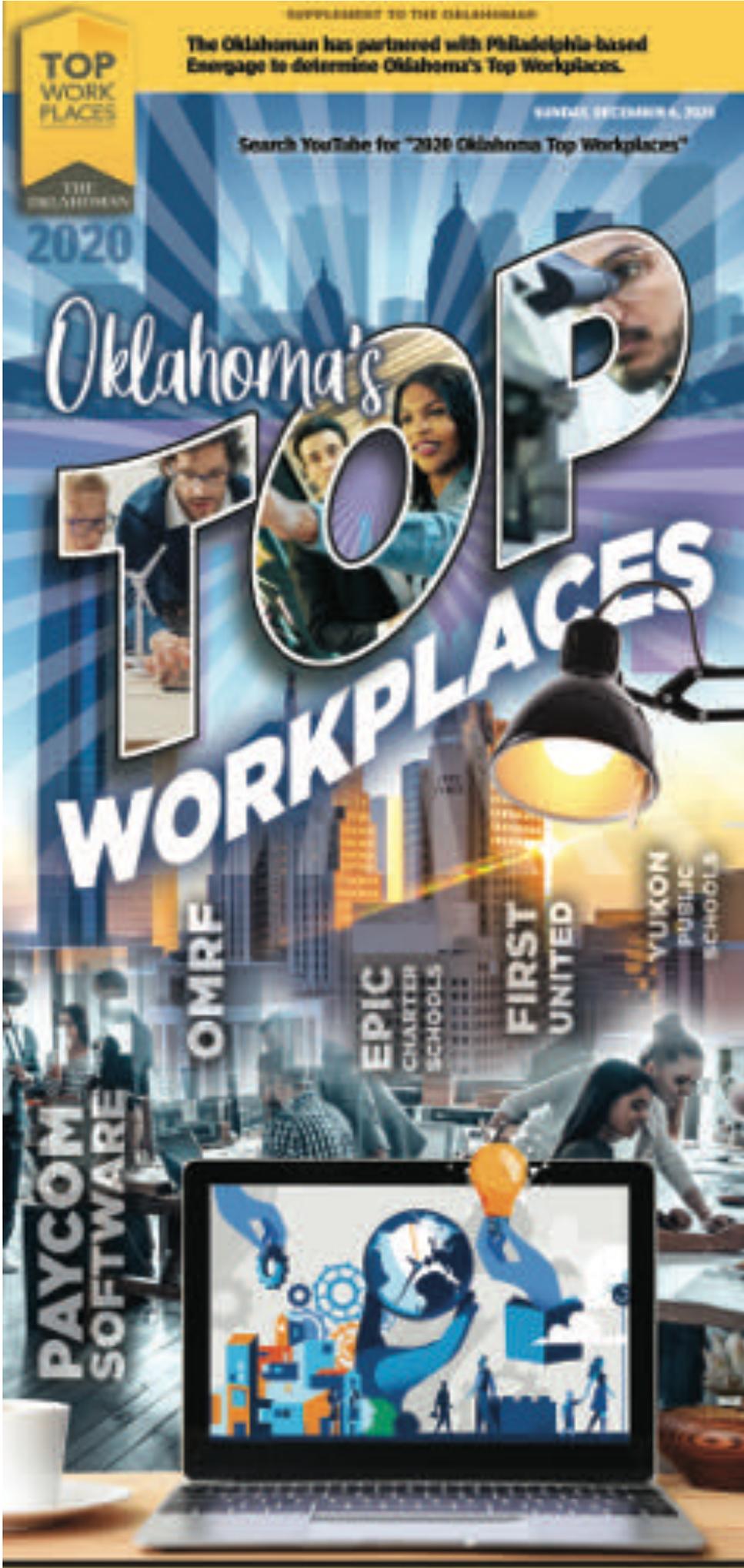
PAYCOM
SOFTWARE

OMRF

EPIC
CHARTER
SCHOOLS

FIRST
UNITED

YUKON
PUBLIC
SCHOOLS



How the companies ranked

LARGE (350-PLUS EMPLOYEES)

Rank	Company	Founded	Ownership	Sector	Locations	Regional employees
1	Paycom Software Inc.	1998	Public	Payroll and HR technology	3	2,905
2	Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation (OMRF)	1946	Private	Biomedical research	1	455
3	Epic Charter Schools	2011	Nonprofit	Education – primary/secondary school	1	1,800
4	First United	1900	Private	Banking, mortgage, insurance and wealth management	42	729
5	Yukon Public Schools	1891	Public	Public education	1	1,012
6	US Cellular	1983	Public	Telecommunications	1	579
7	Noble Research Institute	1945	Nonprofit	Agricultural research, consultation and education	1	370
8	Panda Restaurant Group	1973	Private	Restaurant	27	374
9	Oklahoma Health Care Authority	1993	Government	State government	1	557
10	Gateway First Bank	2000	Private	Financial services	12	442
11	Webco Industries Inc.	1969	Public	Metal tubing manufacturer	6	831
12	CACI	1962	Public	Information technology	1	384
13	Sherwood Companies	1934	Private	Heavy construction and civil engineering	5	474
14	OnCue Marketing, LLC	1966	Private	Convenience store/gas station	71	1,168
15	Ben E. Keith Company	1906	Private	Wholesale Foodservice Distribution	1	430
16	FAA Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center	1946	Government	Aviation and aerospace	1	3,000
17	St. Mary's Regional Medical Center	1915	Private	Hospitals	1	490
18	Santa Fe South Schools Inc.	2001	Public	Education – primary/secondary school	9	362
19	Locke Supply Co	1955	Private	Wholesale distribution and sales	43	883
20	Cooper Auto Group	1946	Private	Automotive retail and service	8	552
21	Edmond Public Schools	1924	Public	Public education	1	2,946

MIDSIZE (125-349 EMPLOYEES)

1	Meridian Technology Center	1973	Public	Education	1	132
2	Central Technology Center	1970	Government	Education	2	167
3	Melton Truck Lines Inc.	1954	Private	Distribution, logistics and freight	1	264
4	The Haskell Company	1965	Private	Architecture, engineering, construction	2	135
5	CompSource Mutual Insurance Company	1933	Cooperative/mutual	Workers' compensation	2	300
6	Lifeshare Transplant Donor Services Of Oklahoma Inc	34	Nonprofit	Nonprofit	3	128
7	GableGotwals	1944	Private	Law	2	173
8	Bob Mills Furniture	1971	Private	Furniture, home furnishings and accessories	2	135
9	Claims Management Resources	1988	Private	Claims management	1	193
10	TBS Factoring Service	2004	Private	Financial services and insurance	203	202
11	CEC	1966	Private	Engineering	5	214
12	Ross Group Construction Corp.	1996	Private	Building construction	2	130
13	BKD CPAs & Advisors	1923	Partnership	Public accounting	3	125
14	Oklahoma Wesleyan University	1905	Private	College/university	2	155
15	World Acceptance Corp.	1962	Public	Consumer finance	75	194
16	Great Plains Bank	1907	Private	Community bank	24	315
17	Dept. of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services	1953	Government	State government	1	271
18	City of Mustang	1969	Government	Local government	1	164
19	Standley Systems LLC	1934	Private	IT solutions, office equipment sales, leasing and services	10	148
20	APMEX	2000	Private	Precious metals	1	236

SMALL (FEWER THAN 125 EMPLOYEES)

1	PaceButler Corporation	1987	Private	Buyers of used cellphones	1	41
2	Aviation Training Consulting LLC	2001	Private	Federal government	2	51
3	MY Consulting Group	2003	Private	Custom software development and consulting	1	35
4	OKIE811	1979	Nonprofit	Utilities and telecommunications	1	61
5	Rich & Cartmill Insurance	1922	Private	Independent insurance agency	2	107
6	Cornerstone Home Lending	1988	Private	Mortgage	1	74
7	Homes by Taber	2000	Public	Integrated development, construction and management	1	100
8	Garver	1919	Private	Multidisciplinary engineering, planning, architecture	3	87
9	Casualty Corporation of America Inc.	1990	Private	Property and casualty insurance company	1	41
10	Kindful Hospice	2018	Partnership	Hospice	5	86
11	GSB Inc. Architects & Planners	1979	Private	Architecture	1	37
12	Regent Bank	1898	Private	Bank	4	108
13	Eastern Oklahoma County Technology Center	1983	Public	Education and training	1	79
14	Russell-Murray Hospice Inc.	1986	Nonprofit	Hospice	4	51
15	EOG Resources	1985	Public	Oil and gas exploration and production/extraction	3	102
16	Addison Group	1999	Private	Professional services	2	41
17	MacArthur Associated Consultants	1976	Private	Civil engineering	2	35
18	Orthodontic Associates	1987	Private	Orthodontist	4	52
19	Saxum	2003	Private	Integrated marketing communications	2	38
20	Timberlake Construction	1946	Private	Commercial construction	2	36
21	Oklahoma Water Resources Board	1957	Government	State government	1	99
22	Accenture	2001	Public	Consulting	1	58
23	Brainerd Chemical Company Inc.	1959	Private	Specialty chemical solutions	3	59
24	TEAM Professional Companies	2002	Private	Business services	2	46
25	Phillips Murrah PC	1986	Private	Law	1	118
26	CMSWillowbrook Inc.	1974	Private	Construction management	3	102
27	Presort First Class	1982	Private	Design, print and mail	1	93
28	Positive Tomorrows	1989	Nonprofit	School/social service agency for homeless children, families	1	35
29	C L Boyd Company Inc.	1913	Private	John Deere Construction equipment dealership	3	88
30	Valiant Artificial Lift Solutions	2016	Private	Petroleum, gas and petroleum products	2	55
31	Ditch Witch of Oklahoma	1976	Private	Construction equipment	2	53
32	Stan Johnson Company	1985	Private	Commercial real estate brokerage firm	1	88
33	Air Assurance Company	1985	Private	Heating, ventilation, air condition and plumbing	1	100
34	IMMY	1979	Private	Life sciences	1	84

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6 'crazy eight' mainstays, 18 newbies make 2020 Top Workplaces List

By Paula Burkes
For The Oklahoman

There are six "crazy eights" among this year's Top Workplaces winners. That is, six companies have made the list every year since the contest's 2013 debut.

Meanwhile, the 2020 list includes 18 newcomers from nearly as many industries.

Among the 21 organizations on this year's list of companies that employ 350 or more, three are eight-time winners: No. 1-ranked Paycom Software Inc.; Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation, the runner-up; and No. 15, Ben E. Keith Co., a wholesale food service distributor.

Six companies are new to the list, and likely the contest altogether, including First United banking, mortgage, insurance and wealth management company, No. 4; Ardmore-based Noble Research Institute, No. 7; Sand Springs' Webo Industries Inc. metal tube manufacturer, No. 11; Tulsa-based Sherwood Cos. heavy construction and civil engineering firm, No. 13; FAA Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center, No. 16; and Cooper Auto Group in Yukon, No. 20.

Among the 20 mid-size firms (125 to 349 employees), BKD CPAs & Advisors at No. 13 is the only company that can claim eight-year bragging rights.

There are seven mid-size newcomers: The Haskell Co., a Florida-based architecture, engineering and construction firm, No. 4; CompSource Mutual Insurance Co. workers' compensation company, No. 5; Claims



World Acceptance Corporation workers help feed the world. (PROVIDED)

Management Resources, No. 9; Oklahoma Wesleyan University in Bartlesville, No. 14; Greenville, S.C.-based World Acceptance Corporation, No. 15; Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, No. 17; and APMEX precious metals company, No. 20.

Among the 34 top small employers, there are only two that have made the list every year: EOG Resources, No. 15, and Saxum integrated marketing communications firm, No. 19. Five are new to the contest, including No. 3-ranked MY Consulting custom software development and consulting firm; Kindful Hospice in Ada, No. 10; Illinois-based Accenture consulting company, No. 22; Presort First Class design, print and mail firm, No. 27; and Positive Tomorrow's school for homeless children, No. 28.



A Ben E. Keith employee gets to work in the company warehouse. (PROVIDED)

TOP LARGE EMPLOYER

Paycom strives for better, productive conversations companywide

By Paula Burkes
For The Oklahoman

Seek to understand and to be understood.

By all accounts, the initiative seems to be what propelled Paycom Software Inc. to No. 1 large employer on the 2020 Top Workplaces list.

The public, web-based human resources and payroll technology company this year launched an employee listening and engagement series called "Better Conversations," which was cited by CEO Chad Richison in his leadership award Q&A and in numerous, anonymous employee surveys. "We've really learned how to connect deeply with one another over challenging topics," said Kesha Jones, a manager of banking who served as a facilitator for the training. "I'm really looking forward to how better conversations will continue to evolve and expand in order to make our culture even stronger."

In submitting the company's Top Workplaces application, employee spokesman Jason Bodin said the sessions provided "a safe atmosphere that encourages open dialogue where everyone's voice will be heard and we all can be our authentic selves. Paycom appreciates and values diversity of thought, and believes 'Better Conversations' enables us to gather ideas for a more inclusive workplace by listening to learn."

Paycom first nabbed top billing among large employers in 2016, after



Most of Paycom's some 2,900 Oklahoma employees work at its headquarters at 7501 W Memorial Rd. (PROVIDED)

three years as runner-up. The Oklahoma City-based company has ranked in the top five large employers since the contest started in 2012. Paycom — which has grown to some 2,900 Oklahoma employees since its 1998 founding — offers cloud-based software services to help employers manage payroll, hiring, health insurance, retirement and other human resources tasks. It has more than 26,500 clients in all 50 states, annual revenues of \$737.7 million and joined the S&P 500 in early 2020.

Employee perks include individual health insurance coverage for only \$1 per paycheck, free long-term disability, free \$25,000 life insurance policies and free access to an on-site gym.

In 2019, Paycom reached new giving heights, including the largest employee-employer contribution The Salvation Army Central Oklahoma Area Command ever has received. In 2020, the company donated to multiple organizations,

including Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma, Boys & Girls Club, Project AWARE, YMCA, National Alliance on Mental Illness, Johns Hopkins' COVID-19 Response Fund, Paralyzed Veterans of America and more.

"I'm an ambitious person, and this is an ambitious company," Kesha Jones said. "At Paycom, any good idea is heard, and there's ample opportunity to grow. Any skill or gift you want to develop or use ... all of those things can happen at Paycom."

Shelly Ballew, an 8-year employee and manager of learning and development, agrees.

"Everyone who works at Paycom has an incredibly positive attitude; you notice it from the minute you walk in," Ballew said.

"Also, everyone is incredibly passionate about what they do, and ultimately, that's where the innovation comes from," she said. "They're consistently driving to be better, which creates an environment where everyone can grow professionally and personally."

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TOP MIDSIZE EMPLOYER

Tech center provides employees with ‘amazing’ culture, respect

By Paula Burkes
For The Oklahoman

STILLWATER — Not long after Scott Schaefer joined the staff at Meridian Technology Center, his wife was diagnosed with breast cancer.

Schaefer was pleased, and more than relieved, with the response of his new employer — the No. 1 company on this year’s Top Workplaces list. “I was able to take off work and be with my wife for every appointment she had. It was never an issue,” Schaefer said.

Fast forward six years and Schaefer, 44, is still pleased. His wife is a cancer survivor, and he loves and appreciates the independence and trust he’s been given to develop what originally was a newly created job as a career development specialist for Meridian.

“The atmosphere, and the respect we give each other, here is amazing. There’s genuine care,” said Schaefer, who makes weekly site visits to schools the district serves to talk with junior high and high school students about career choices.

This is the seventh consecutive year for Meridian to be named a top workplace, and the second year for the center to take the winning spot among midsize employers. The technical school first ranked No. 1 in the category in 2017 and was runner-up last year.

Established in 1975, Meridian employs 132 and serves some 800 morning and afternoon students from 10 area high schools, including Agra, Carney, Glencoe, Guthrie, Morrison, Mulhall-Orlando, Pawnee, Perkins-Tryon, Perry and Stillwater. It also offers area companies low-cost skills training in leadership, safety, computer and other



Scott Schaefer, a career development specialist with Meridian Technology Center, displays a wheel he uses to talk with teenage students at area schools about future goals. (SARAH PHIPPS/THE OKLAHOMAN)



Miranda Mitchell talks about her job at Meridian Technology Center, which focuses on training future nurses through virtual study, clinicals and hands-on care of this talking, breathing pretend patient. (SARAH PHIPPS/THE OKLAHOMAN)

she said, have included:

- Launching Values U, a professional development training series for staff and supervisors. Sessions have covered habits, building strong work relationships, communication, asking good questions and productivity tips.
- Adding a Zoom option to monthly staff meetings to give employees an opportunity to stay up-to-date on information, when they can’t attend in person.
- Forming a safety committee.
- Working with the Professional Development Committee to add an online component for some in-service training.

Miranda Mitchell has worked at Meridian only a few months, but said she’s glad she moved from working as a floor nurse for seriously ill children to being a practical nursing instructor.

“I always wanted to go the education route and when I learned of this opening, I jumped at the opportunity,” she said.

“I can only do so much with my two hands, but in February, we’ll graduate a class of eight highly qualified, well-educated nurses, and send their 16 hands to help strengthen the frontlines. In September, we’ll send another 14 — or 28 hands.”

Meridian’s training is an intense one-year program, after which graduates sit for state certification tests to become licensed practical nurses (LPNs).

Mitchell became familiar with the program, she said, during a former job on the acute rehabilitation floor at Stillwater Medical Center. “Meridian students do their clinical rotations there, and I saw how prepared, respectful and kind they, and their instructors, are.”

areas, and serves as a business incubator for startups. Dana Wallace, executive

director of communications and marketing, said Meridian uses the feedback from Top

Workplaces surveys to strengthen its work. Over the past few years, initiatives,

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TOP SMALL EMPLOYER

PaceButler strives to help employees be their best selves

By Paula Burke
For The Oklahoman

Could you go three days without cussing, complaining or gossiping? What if it meant a chance at winning \$500 in a monthly drawing — and the more clean, three-day stretches you logged, the greater your odds?

The unusual employee perk is just one of many provided by PaceButler Corporation, this year's Top Workplace winner among small companies.

A business-to-business firm that buys used cellphones from Coca-Cola, hospitals and others, PaceButler also rewards employees \$10 for every personal development book they read; \$500 to employees who smoke and can go 60 days toward quitting; and a shot in a \$50 drawing for a physical fitness regimen that includes walking around the building at 5915 NW 23, sit-ups and pull-ups.

"Our mission is to build great lives, and PaceButler takes that — and the culture here — very seriously," assistant administrator Kyle Van Hook said.

Van Hook, 22, of Moore, started with the firm a little over a year ago, and his salary has nearly doubled. He spent three months as a phone buyer; then worked as a tester, inspecting the capabilities of phones; before being promoted to his current position.

He worked for his dad's home repair business when a client and a PaceButler employee suggested he apply there.

The employee, who was rewarded a \$1,000 cash bonus for what proved to be a good referral, "liked my energy and thought I'd be a good fit," Van Hook said.

"It wasn't long before I felt a part of the whole company," he said. "A lot of attention



Austin Payne sorts cellphones at PaceButler in Oklahoma City. (BRYAN TERRY/THE OKLAHOMAN)



Staci Newton uses a computer program to check cellphones at PaceButler in Oklahoma City. (BRYAN TERRY/THE OKLAHOMAN)

is paid to everybody here; developing employees is a big thing; and there's a lot of room to adjust."

"They want us to be the best version of ourselves in and outside the workplace," Van Hook said.

Michael Durand, 48, and a senior account manager who's worked for PaceButler for five years, agrees.

"It's not about the job, so much as the culture," said Durand, a former military man who served in Iraq. "The

whole company is behind you in a good and friendly way," he said.

Favorite employee activities include a lavish Christmas dinner party for workers and their families, and a Halloween party at the home of CEO Tom Pace.

Said Pace, "We pour into our employees every Monday morning with a company-wide, hour-and-a-half personal development session," including a video and discussion.

"It's about service to others, and the more we give, the more we live," he said.

The company has donated more than 1.6 million new, education or religious books to the World Book Bank, which serves prisons, homeless shelters and more.

When COVID-19 broke out in March, PaceButler had to slash its workforce from some 80 to 20, Butler said. The companies from which the firm buys phones had shut down, he said.



PaceButler CEO Tom Pace talks about his company at PaceButler in Oklahoma City. (BRYAN TERRY/THE OKLAHOMAN)



Michael Durand talks about working at PaceButler in Oklahoma City. (BRYAN TERRY/THE OKLAHOMAN)



Kyle Van Hook talks about working at PaceButler in Oklahoma City. (BRYAN TERRY/THE OKLAHOMAN)

PaceButler, which started in 1987 in the computer business, weathered similar layoffs in 2002, Pace said.

The good news is the company, at the time of this interview, already had built back to a staff of 49.

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Best of the rest

Paula Burkes
For The Oklahoman

Large employers

No. 2 Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation

Last year's top larger employer, OMRF claimed the No. 1 spot two of the past four years, and ranked in the top 10 every year since the Best Places to Work contest began. In this year's Special Awards, OMRF ranked tops in the company moving in the right direction, based on employee feedback.

The 74-year-old OMRF is an independent, nonprofit biomedical research institute dedicated to understanding and developing more effective treatments for human disease. OMRF scientists focus on such critical research areas as Alzheimer's disease, cancer, lupus, multiple sclerosis, and cardiovascular disease.

Employee benefits include a high-deductible health plan that makes it affordable for employees with chronic diseases to treat them and an on-site gym free to employees.

No. 3 Epic Charter School

Epic Charter School was named the 2018 top large employer and No. 3 last year. In this year's Special Awards, Epic ranked best in career training among contestants in all categories.

Founded in 2011, the school is Oklahoma's largest public charter school. It enrolls students year-round in all 77 Oklahoma counties and provides a free, state-accredited, and individualized education for each student through a blended learning model that pairs digital curriculum with regular, one-on-one instruction by a fully certified Oklahoma teacher. Demand



Epic Charter School has made the Top Workplaces four of the past four years. (PROVIDED)



Yukon Public Schools children participate in story time. (PROVIDED)

for services is growing annually. Epic's compensation system includes both base compensation and performance pay, with average teacher compensation of \$63,000 annually.

Notably, Epic is a repeat Top Workplaces winner, though the school is under investigation for alleged embezzlement. Two years ago, Epic teachers raved about support from the charter school's superintendent and founders, autonomy to set their own schedules, employee parties and pay, including up to 40% in performance bonuses. Its blended

learning model pairs digital curriculum with regular one-on-one teaching.

Epic assistant superintendent and spokeswoman Shelly Hickman said last year, "Obviously, we did well because our employees responded favorably about where they work and appreciate the supportive programs we have in place for them."

No. 4 First United Bank and Trust

A newcomer to the Top Workplaces list, First United

Bank and Trust took top honors in trust, or its employees feeling senior management is tuned-in to what's really happening.

The company's purpose is to inspire and empower others to "spend life wisely," through a balance of faith, financial well-being, health and wellness, and personal growth. The community bank encourages its staff to volunteer time and energy to their communities' civic, religious, neighborhood, minority, small business, charitable and community development groups, and offers a variety of ways to earn days off and more through workshops, online education, wellness screenings, volunteering and participating in Bible study groups.

First United provides a comprehensive benefits package, including paying 100% of the employee-only premium for a high-deductible health insurance plan and a health savings account contribution. Its retirement plan is an employee stock ownership plan (ESOP) with 401(k) features that include a company match and optional Roth individual retirement account contributions.



OMRF's Siqi Gao, Melinda Wu and Charmain Fernando get back to onsite research together after months of staggered shifts. (PROVIDED)

No. 5 Yukon Public Schools

Up from No. 8 last year, Yukon Public Schools made the Top Workplaces list for five straight years. In this year's Special Awards, the school district ranked best in employees feeling appreciated.

The district currently serves 9,000 students each day. It's in the middle of a more than \$40 million bond project that, among many other things, will result in the opening of a new state-of-the-art intermediate school this year.

The district provides full retirement contributions to the Oklahoma Teacher's Retirement System for full-time employees, and insurance to all employees working at least six hours per day.

Midsize employers

No. 2 Central Technology Center

Climbing one notch from last year, Central Technology Center has hit the Top Workplaces list for six consecutive years, and this year won top work-life balance Special Award among companies of all sizes.

The tech center says its biggest benefit is seeing students

See BEST, T8

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58,000

students and their families now understand how

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BEST

From Page T7

succeed, followed by a positive atmosphere and culture that can be seen and felt through staff attitudes.

Central Tech achieved 95% placement for students entering the workforce or continuing their education. Of graduates in the workforce, 71% are employed in jobs related to their career major.

In addition to generous paid time off, Central Tech employees are part of the Oklahoma Teachers Retirement System, receive staff paid health insurance, have the opportunity to invest in a 403(b), cafeteria plan, flex spending account and if qualified, an educational reimbursement policy.

No. 3 Melton Truck Lines

In recent years, Melton Truck Lines claimed the top or runner-up spot among mid-size employers on the Top Workplaces list, and this year was recognized for having the most helpful, caring managers in the Special Awards category.

The company is an over-the-road flatbed transportation company, providing industry leading transportation services for the United States, Canada and Mexico. Melton currently services more than 5,000 shippers with a 98% on-time pick-up and delivery record.

Its numerous company benefits include quarterly bonuses; raises and promotions; a no-fee, on-site health clinic and dental office; subsidized cafeteria; free on-site gym; and a year-round casual dress code.

No. 4 The Haskell Co.

A newcomer to the Top Workplaces contest, The Haskell Company is a Jackson, Florida-based architectural, engineering and construction firm. It was founded in 1965 and has 1,380 U.S. employees, including 135 who work at two locations in Oklahoma.



OKIE811 employees meet over Zoom. (PROVIDED)

Haskell has a long-standing tradition of civic engagement and philanthropy, dedicating 3% of profits to charitable causes; mainly education and the arts. The Haskell culture is responsive, entrepreneurial and collaborative with core values of team, excellence, service and trust.

No. 5 CompSource Mutual Insurance Co.

Another newcomer to the Top Workplaces list, this 85-year-old company leads the Oklahoma workers' compensation market by providing financial stability, delivering superior service and innovative solutions; promoting workplace safety, and serving as a trusted partner to the Oklahoma business community.

Its employees not only are recognized as the most charitable and giving teams in the state, but also as the best and brightest in their respective fields.

Small employers

No. 2 Aviation Training Consulting LLC

The top small employer in 2017 and No. 3 last year, Altus-based ATC has made the Top Workplaces list four of four

years, and this year took the top Special Award among contestants of all sizes for having strong values.

The company has training contracts for every plane in the Marine Corps, AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System) planes at Tinker Air Force Base, the B-52 bomber in Shreveport, Louisiana, and Minot Air Force Base in North Dakota, and more.

In Edmond, it employs software engineers who specialize in cybersecurity. The company provides many perks for its employees, including matching 401(k) contributions and 100% paid health insurance premiums for its workers; 75% for dependents.

No. 3 MY Consulting Group

This is the first year for this 17-year-old custom software and development consulting firm to vie for, and win, a Top Workplace distinction. A woman-owned, privately held company, MY Consulting Group (MYCG) is headquartered in Oklahoma City and employs 35. CEO Amber Mitchell won accolades among small firms for her employees' confidence in her leadership.

Many MYCG clients are organizations with unique, one-of-a-kind needs, such as



CompSource Mutual employees dressed up as "CompSource High" during the annual Halloween celebration. (PROVIDED)

state agencies with both state and federal mandates their software must accommodate. Most of the firm's software also does complex financial calculations – such as pension fund calculations, online oil and gas auctions, enterprise-level financial accounting to include cost allocation of state and federal funding sources, etc.

The company provides health and dental insurance for employees and their families at no cost, paid holidays and paid time off, retirement plan with company match and immediate vesting, annual training budgets, etc.

For 10-year service anniversaries, MYCG treats employees and families to cruises. This spring's Alaskan cruise was rescheduled for the summer, due to the pandemic.

No. 4 OKIE811

OKIE811 has been a Top Workplaces winner six years; two consecutively. No. 5 on last year's list, the organization enhanced its operations, communications, training, leadership, direction, benefits and more – based on the free scientific assessments offered by Energage, the newspaper's content and research partner.

"Feedback from one year's survey helped us see that we needed to allocate time for employees to develop professionally with training," according to Executive Director Susan Bohl. "Our supervisors now hold monthly conference

calls with employees, many of whom work from home, and at least one face-to-face meeting annually to check how things are working and what employees may need help with."

The nonprofit organization allows home and business owners to know where utility lines run on their property, pays 100% of employee life insurance premium and short- and long-term disability premiums.

No. 5 Stability Cannabis

This 2-year-old cannabis cultivator was the No. 1 small employer on the Top Workplaces List last year – the first year the company competed.

Stability is the state's largest indoor cultivator and the only providing safer, longevity-increasing nitrogen packaged flower. Company leaders anticipate being among the nation's 10 largest cultivators by year-end.

The firm provides its 85 employees with full access to medical, dental and vision insurance. It also focuses on providing workers with a "Stability Vibe," or a "no jerks" environment in which they can look forward to coming to work to each day and allows for work-life balance. Each employee is provided two days of time off each month with the security of knowing that their job is protected. The company also provides subsidized snacks and meals and onsite yoga twice a month.

3 employers make big strides in same area

By Paula Burkes
For The Oklahoman

"I feel well-informed about decisions at my company." The three employers who made the biggest strides in improvement from last year excelled in this same area.

Tulsa-based Rich & Cartmill Insurance, No. 6 on the small employer list, improved 23%; TBS Factoring Service, No. 10 among midsize employ-ers, improved 21%; and No.

1 Paycom Software Inc. improved 14%.

"What's pretty amazing is that the question they all improved on the most was regarding communication," said Bob Helbig, media partnership director for Energage.

"I would say that is a direct reflection of how the companies handled the challenges of the pandemic," Helbig said.

The three companies' spokespersons confirmed as much.

Said Chris Kyger, manager

of insurance operations for Rich & Cartmill that employs 107 across two locations, "I believe the large jump in our ratings is related to us sending the majority of our staff home to work remotely during the COVID pandemic. We were lucky that we had been testing remote work for the past two years and so we knew how it would work."

"Our IT department has been amazing," Kyger said. "They were able to roll out remote work ... within two

days of receiving laptops. I think our staff knows we believe in them and we trust them to get the job done."

Jennifer Lickteig, CEO of TBS Factoring, said, "We actually started a weekly broadcast to all employ-ees which is sent out every Monday. It's really more of a fun escape, with funny skits and business updates and a way for us all to stay connected while we are all still working from home."

And Chad Richison, CEO of

Paycom. "[After transitioning to nearly 100% working from home in March], we increased our communication and training across our organization, while also launching new engagement initiatives like our 'Better Conversations' series."

Said Paycom spokesman Jason Bodin, "This increase in communication, mixed with these new engagement initiatives, has really added to the strength of our culture."

Leadership Award – Large Employers

Paycom capitalizes on opportunities in coronavirus' wake



Richison

Chad Richison, founder and CEO of Paycom Software Inc.

By Paula Burkes
For The Oklahoman

How has COVID-19 affected your sales and productivity?

The pandemic exposed seams created by disparate human capital management systems. This, mixed with the increasing trend toward a more autonomous workforce, creates higher demand for Paycom's

single-database software solution nationwide. We've seen elevated lead volumes driven by our advertising investments, which have helped with new business sales achievements and set us up very well for the future.

We believe the value proposition of our solution is stronger than ever and we continue to see successes as a result of our technology and go-to-market strategy.

Have some or all of your employees worked remotely during the pandemic? How

have you maintained employee engagement and morale?

With the health and safety of our employees in mind, we transitioned to nearly 100% working from home in March, all while continuing to provide our clients with world-class service, develop new software and add new clients to our platform. During this time, we increased communication and training across our organization, while also launching new engagement initiatives like our "Better

Conversations" series.

Has there been a silver lining to this pandemic for your company?

This situation didn't build character; it revealed it. I'm proud of our co-workers' continued grit and dedication. Our sales numbers are climbing and our retention remains strong, while our value proposition is becoming mainstream. We have a lot to be proud of and are going to make our culture stronger than ever.

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Leadership Award – Mid-size Employers

Amber Mitchell, CEO of MY Consulting Group

Existing work-from-home practices gave MY Consulting a leg-up on COVID-19

By Paula Burkes
For The Oklahoman

How has COVID-19 affected your sales?



Mitchell

We have been very fortunate that our sales were not impacted. However, the pandemic has created a greater need for our services. We build custom software applications – typically for large organizations who are looking to provide more and more services online and streamline their internal processes to accommodate their newly remote workforces. That just happens to be our wheelhouse.

Productivity?

By every metric we track, our productivity has improved. The nature of building software requires concentration and focus. By eliminating many of the normal interruptions that occur in office and social settings, our clients have consistently provided feedback that supports this.

Have some or all of your employees worked remotely during the pandemic? How have you maintained employee engagement and morale?

All of my employees were already allowed to work from home twice a week as a perk prior to the pandemic, so we were already set up to handle remote work. Very early into this, in fact prior to any city or state official mandate in



MY Consulting Group employees cheer on the Thunder. [SUBMITTED PHOTO]

March, I asked my staff to start working entirely remote. We have some employees (or employee family members) who are vulnerable and I didn't want to risk it given the remote infrastructure we already had in place.

One of our biggest challenges from COVID-19 has been maintaining employee engagement while working exclusively from home. For the first time in my company's history, I have employees I have never met. Our culture is extremely family-oriented, but in a way that is two-fold. First, we believe strongly in work/life balance. Work weeks are 40 hours. Period.

We hire the best people we can find in the industry and they can do incredible things within those 40 hours – more than most will accomplish in 60. But after that, I want them to unplug and focus



MY Consulting employees participate in a charity color run. [SUBMITTED PHOTO]

on their families or their hobbies. Secondly, MYCG is also a family. We literally refer internally to the "MYCG family." And like any other family, it has been

really hard to be disconnected this last year. Both formally scheduled lunches on my dime and impromptu lunches among the staff were regular occurrences before

COVID-19. We had regular (at least quarterly) happy hour gatherings that I hosted for the staff at places varying from the Melting Pot to Thunder suites as a way to just get together and socialize. And equally important, staff friendships developed in more meaningful ways. As we have hired new employees especially, it has been hard to onboard them virtually and then collaborate with them virtually and never have that non-work connection. We miss it!

We are typically not big on internal "meetings," but we are trying to do more of them over Microsoft Teams for reasons unrelated to just projects to foster greater communication and a sense of connection. Our staff is very active on internal message boards with each other also throughout the day. All of that helps, but it is definitely not a substitute for in-person social opportunities. We have had quite a few team members experience life events this year that have been difficult and our MYCG family has rallied around them, as is always the case. That, more than anything, probably keeps our morale high by reminding everyone just how special our culture truly is.

Has there been a silver lining to this pandemic for your company?

I think a silver lining can be found in any situation, but COVID-19 has caused so much heartache to so many people that I hate to give it any positive credit for anything. ... I think it has illustrated for me just how established our company culture truly is. My employees haven't seen me or each other since the middle of March and yet filled out a survey that landed us here. I'm blessed.



jobs.omrf.org

Leadership Award – Small Employers

Jeffrey Orlowski, president and CEO, LifeShare Transplant Donor Services Of Oklahoma Inc.

LifeShare embraces 'can-do' value during pandemic

By Paula Burkes
For The Oklahoman

How has COVID-19 affected your sales? Productivity?

LifeShare's operations were impacted in several ways. Our staff routinely are called into hospitals throughout Oklahoma to assess the potential for dona-



Orlowski

tion and to support families through the organ donation process. Because many hospitals had restrictions on visitors, we had to work through additional steps to enter the hospital and then often were required to deal with donor families by phone or Facetime because the family wasn't allowed to be in the hospital. Once the donation occurred, we also experienced a brief period when many transplant centers were limiting their transplants to the sickest patients. This in some cases was to avoid tying up hospital resources like ICU beds or ventilators. Additionally, because the knowledge of COVID-19 was rapidly evolving in March and April, and because transplant patients are more susceptible to infection due to medications they're given to suppress organ rejection, many centers chose not to transplant any patients other than those who were critically ill and couldn't wait. This meant we saw decreased numbers of transplants



LifeShare Transplant Donor Services of Oklahoma Inc. employees recognize Blue Team appreciation day. [SUBMITTED PHOTO]

nationally, and had to deal with more logistical and transportation-related issues to accomplish getting donated organs to appropriate and available recipients.

Have some or all of your employees worked remotely during the pandemic? How have you maintained employee engagement and morale?

From March 15 through late May, all of our offices were closed and staff worked either from home or, if clinical staff, from the hospitals as needed and appropriate. Since late May, we have evolved to a "Blue" and "Green" team schedule for non-call staff, with the "Blue" team working in a LifeShare office Monday and Tuesday and the "Green" team working in a LifeShare office on Thursday

While the pandemic has been challenging, it's given our team the chance to embrace and demonstrate one of our company's strategic anchors: change, and to exhibit our core value of being "Can-Do" in how we approach our mission.

and Friday. Our call teams work from home and only come in as needed or to pick up supplies, and our call center has remained open but isolated throughout the pandemic. We have worked hard to maintain engagement and morale. We have

increased our use of Go-to-Meeting and Teams. During the height of the pandemic, I provided regular virtual town halls to update staff, and recently we completed both our first virtual all-staff meeting and our first virtual open benefits enrollment. Additionally, we have had two outdoor events (one for the Blue team and one for Green) with local food trucks and marked off spaces on the grass so team members could be outside, socialize in a socially distant manner, and enjoy some good food. We also took that opportunity to provide staff with a T-shirt in their team color and LifeShare masks. Finally, we have distributed some gift cards, tickets to an OU football game and other small items to assure staff feel appreciated and connected.



LifeShare Transplant Donor Services of Oklahoma Inc. workers celebrate employee birthdays. [SUBMITTED PHOTO]

Has there been a silver lining to this pandemic for your company?

While the pandemic has been challenging, it's given our team the chance to embrace and demonstrate one of our company's strategic anchors: change, and to exhibit our core value of being "Can-Do" in how we approach our mission. As our organization's purpose, saving lives through organ and tissue donation, doesn't stop and as we provide a critical, lifesaving service to the community, we had to adapt, execute and re-adapt as the pandemic unfolded. The silver lining is that we as an organization, at all levels, are confident we can handle any challenge we face and be successful. Thanks to our team's efforts, our donor hospitals' support, and the incredible generosity of Oklahoma donors and donor families, we, to-date in 2020, are on a record pace to provide more lifesaving organs for transplant than any prior year.



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Who are the Top Workplaces contenders?

By Paula Burkes
For The Oklahoman

Accenture is a leading global professional services company, providing a broad range of services in strategy and consulting, interactive, technology and operations, with digital capabilities across all of these services. With 513,000 people serving clients in more than 120 countries, Accenture brings continuous innovation to help clients improve their performance and create lasting value across their enterprises.

Addison Group specializes in consulting, staffing and recruiting, and executive search, and offers capabilities across multiple sectors, including information technology, finance and accounting, health care, human resources, administrative and digital marketing. The firm has a growing network of companies, offices across the United States, and deep relationships in regional and local markets.

Air Assurance Company offers commercial and residential heating, cooling, ventilation and plumbing repair and replacement services across the Tulsa metro.

APMEX Inc. is the nation's largest online precious metals e-retailer serving a diverse clientele nationwide and beyond. The retailer boasts speedy delivery and a broad inventory in both the bullion and vintage categories.

Aviation Training Consulting LLC is based in Altus and employs professionals who work there, in Edmond, just outside Washington, D.C., and across the country as consultants in the aviation industry. President and



Brainerd Chemical Co. Inc. employees work the loading dock in Tuttle. (PROVIDED)



Addison Group employees pack food during their yearly volunteer trip to the Regional Foodbank. (PROVIDED)

CEO Robert Cox is a U.S. Air Force retiree who founded ATC 19 years ago.

Ben E. Keith Company is a wholesale distributor of food service products — delivering dry, refrigerated and frozen food products, paper goods, chemicals,

equipment and small wares.

BKD CPAs & Advisors is a national CPA and advisory firm with professionals who serve clients in all 50 states and internationally. The company offers a variety of services in accounting, audit and assurance, tax,

risk management, technology, corp. finance, forensic and valuation services and wealth management to a wide range of industries.

Bob Mills Furniture specializes in home furnishings and mattress sales.

Brainerd Chemical Company Inc. is a major manufacturer and distributor of chemicals for research facilities, industrial plants and agricultural operations.

C L Boyd Company Inc., aka the Clarence L. Boyd company, is the John Deere construction equipment dealer for much of Oklahoma and more than 100 years old. The Crews family has been involved in operations since the 1930s.

CACI is a \$5.7 billion company whose mission and enterprise technology and expertise play a vital role in our national security, safeguarding our troops, and enabling our government to deliver cost-effective and high-quality support for all Americans.

Casualty Corporation of America Inc. is a locally owned Oklahoma property and casualty insurance company based in Jones. The company commenced business in 1964.

CEC is a privately held, multidiscipline engineering firm whose collaborative, highly skilled problem-solvers provide solutions to improve infrastructure, from conception, to design, to construction. Incorporated in 1966, CEC has grown to more than 210 employees strong, with offices located in Texas, along with Oklahoma. Clients include numerous federal, state, municipal, county, government agencies and private organizations.

Central Technology Center, part of the Oklahoma CareerTech system, provides technical education leading to individual success and elevates the workforce

See **CONTENDERS**, T13

It's a Great Team that Makes the City of Mustang a Top Workplace.

Thank You!



We Believe our Businesses, Churches, Parks, Schools, and Most Importantly our Citizens make Mustang the OKC Metro Area's Top Community.



CONTENDERS

From Page T12

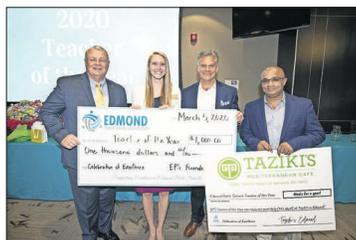
through economic development collaborations. Last year, CTC had more than 20,000 enrollments and provided customized business and industry training to 400 companies. Training included a wide array of safety classes with an emphasis on tailoring curriculum to meet the needs of each specific industry.

City of Mustang offers wide-ranging services to the citizens of Mustang, a suburb of Oklahoma City. An award-winning Library, unmatched recreational opportunities and programming, emergency services that are well planned, equipped and trained, a commitment to reinvest in infrastructure, a construction environment that is not over regulated, a fiscally conservative administration, a calm political climate and a willing and helpful team of employees are what make the organization successful.

Claims Management Resources adjusts and recovers property damage claims for self-insured entities. CMR partners with organizations in the utility industry and governmental agencies.

CMSWillowbrook Inc. is a full-service construction management company. Its construction managers oversee projects from inception to completion including planning, design, procurement and construction to ensure technical and management expertise on each project. The company employs more than 150 employees at offices in Chickasha, Oklahoma City and Tulsa.

CompSource Mutual Insurance Company, formerly CompSource



Edmond Public Schools recognize an outstanding teacher. (PROVIDED)

Oklahoma, provides workers' compensation insurance for businesses in Oklahoma. The company was founded in 1933 and is based in Oklahoma City, with a branch office in Tulsa.

Cooper Auto Group is a third generation auto group started by Claude Cooper, who was widely known as the "best mechanic in Canadian County." Claude's son, Jackie Cooper, took over running the Oldsmobile dealership after Claude had a heart stroke while working on a customer's car in the hot, Oklahoma sun. At 21 years old, Jackie Cooper was the youngest new car dealer ever recognized by a major auto company. The Cooper family has been in the car business since 1946.

Cornerstone Home Lending Inc. is a full-service residential mortgage banker based in Houston; the company has more than 80 offices in 18 states. Home loan transactions are handled in-house by Cornerstone's team of professional, experienced loan specialists and the company funds their loans in-house to meet the agreed-upon closing date. Cornerstone Loan Officers have an average tenure of 12.3-years and have been trained to tailor a loan program to suit each individual

customer's financial needs. Since 68% of the company's business comes from those who have used Cornerstone in the past, they not only have earned the trust of our customers but also are committed to keeping them satisfied clients for life.

Ditch Witch of Oklahoma is a full service construction equipment dealership, fulfilling all underground construction and utility equipment needs. It was the first Ditch Witch dealership in the world. The Bridwell family acquired the business in 1976 and still owns and operates it today. They have dealerships in five states and seven cities, including Oklahoma City and Tulsa.

Eastern Oklahoma County Technology Center (EOCTC) serves about 600 students per year in the communities of Eastern Oklahoma County for over 35 years. Adapting to the increased demand in the health and computer science fields, EOCTC has established programs in biomedical science and computer science. Secondary students living in the technology center district who attend a public, private, parochial, charter or home school are eligible to attend tuition free.

Edmond Public Schools serves 25,106 students.

The district boasts 11 Blue Ribbon Schools — the most of any district in the state. In addition, all three high schools have been recognized as among the best in the nation by U.S. News & World Report, Newsweek and The Washington Post. Edmond has one of the most robust Advanced Placement programs in the state offering 36 AP classes.

EOG Resources one of the largest exploration and production companies in the United States with proved reserves in the United States, Trinidad and China. EOG strives to maintain the lowest possible operating cost structure and a continuing commitment to Environmental, Social, and Governance sustainability. EOG's focus on advanced technology and data analysis improves the utilization of 3-D seismic/microseismic data, the development of reservoir models, the use of drilling equipment, and completion technologies. In order to find and develop low-cost reserves and deliver long-term shareholder value, EOG also prioritizes exploration and drilling of internally generated prospects.

EPIC Charter Schools is Oklahoma's largest public charter school and one of Oklahoma's third largest public school systems as of the 2019-2020 school year with about 30,000 students and 1,400 employees. It enrolls students year-round in all 77 Oklahoma counties and provides a free, state-accredited and individualized education for each student through a blended learning model that pairs digital curriculum with regular, one-on-one instruction by a fully certified Oklahoma teacher.

The FAA Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center since 1946 has led the way in aviation training, research, aircraft maintenance and logistics

support. The center is home to more than 6,300 federal employees, contractors and students.

Employees perform critical functions that touch every aspect of the National Airspace System (NAS) to support the safe and efficient operations of national and international aviation systems.

First United Bank and Trust is a financial services organization dedicated to helping stakeholders protect and make the most of their assets.

GableGotwals is a full-service law firm. Though Oklahoma-based, the 76-year-old firm represents Fortune 500 corporations, entrepreneurs, privately owned companies, foundations and individuals throughout the U.S. and internationally. The firm employs nearly 100 attorneys in Tulsa and Oklahoma City.

Garver, founded in 1919, is an employee-owned multidisciplinary engineering, planning, architectural, and environmental services firm with nearly 800 employees across the United States. Its wide-ranging services focus on aviation, construction, facilities design, federal, survey, transportation and water.

Gateway First Bank is the byproduct of a May 2019 merger of Gateway Mortgage Company and a 100-year-old community bank. Through its 2-year-old Gateway Gives Back program, Gateway — which was founded by Gov. Kevin Stitt — has invested hundreds of millions in financing in low- to moderate-income communities and nonprofit organizations — supporting programs ranging from Folds of Honor and Reading Partners to local food banks.

See CONTENDERS, T14

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From Page T13

Great Plains Bank is a local community bank providing modern, convenient consumer and commercial services, with a little western Oklahoma charm.

GSB Inc. Architects & Planners in Oklahoma City specializes in hospitality, residential, entertainment, community, commercial, educational and civic projects.

Homes by Taber built three homes in 2000, its first year. Since that time, it's built 3,200 homes in more than 80 neighborhoods in Deer Creek/Oklahoma City, Edmond, Moore, Mustang, Norman, Piedmont and Yukon.

IMMY, for more than 35 years, has been setting the standard with accurate and affordable diagnostics for infectious diseases.

Kindful Hospice delivers hospice services and palliative care by providing comfort, relief and kindness to the seriously ill and their families.

Lifeshare Transplant Donor Services Of Oklahoma Inc. recovers organs and tissue for transplant. Its workforce is focused on people ... donors, donor families, recipients and health care professionals.

Locke Supply Co. sells and distributes plumbing, electrical, heating, air conditioning and other supplies to thousands of regional stores, manufacturers and consumers.

MacArthur Associated Consultants, founded in 1976, is an Edmond-based civil engineering firm that



A positive Tomorrows student is greeted on the first day of school. (PROVIDED)



Locke Supply Co., once a mom-and-pop company, has grown to hundreds of branches across Oklahoma, Kansas, Texas, Missouri and Arkansas. (PROVIDED)

serves public and private entities and employs 35 at two locations.

Melton Truck Lines Inc. is an over-the-road flatbed transportation company, providing industry leading transportation services for the United States,

Canada and Mexico.

Meridian Technology Center is part of a network of 29 career technology centers across the state. Since 1975, Meridian has been training individuals for success in the workplace, and partners with

businesses, entrepreneurs and students to strengthen their skills.

The district's footprint includes communities served by the Agra, Carney, Glencoe, Guthrie, Morrison, Mulhall-Orlando, Pawnee, Perkins-Tryon, Perry and Stillwater school districts.

MY Consulting Group offers business and enterprise software solutions in the state of Oklahoma.

Noble Research Institute is comprised of scientists and others who strive to remove, mitigate or avoid the barriers deterring the lasting use of regenerative, profitable land management practices in grazing animal production.

OKIES11 provides a safety and damage prevention program designed to promote public awareness, provide a communication link between excavators and operators of underground facilities, and to eliminate potential hazards posed to excavators, the general public, vital underground facilities and the environment whenever excavation is done.

Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services supports a continuum of programs from community-based treatment and case management to acute inpatient care. It also actively supports prevention programs to reduce the occurrence of substance abuse, violence and other harmful behaviors.

Oklahoma Health Care Authority administers Oklahoma's Medicaid program, known as SoonerCare. The organization aims to educate and engage its 1 million members regarding personal responsibilities for their health services utilization, behaviors and outcomes in partnership with a statewide network of almost 65,000 providers.

Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation (is an independent, non-profit biomedical research institute dedicated to

See CONTENDERS, T15

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From Page T14

understanding and developing more effective treatments for human disease, focusing on Alzheimer's disease, cancer, lupus, Multiple Sclerosis, and cardiovascular disease.

Oklahoma Water Resources Board manages and improves the state's water resources to ensure clean and reliable water supplies, a strong economy, and a safe and healthy environment.

Oklahoma Wesleyan University, based in Bartlesville, is an orthodox Christian University of The Wesleyan Church. It's a place of serious study, honest questions and critical engagement, all in the context of a liberal arts community that honors the primacy of Jesus Christ, the priority of Scripture, the pursuit of truth and the practice of wisdom.

OnCue Marketing LLC convenience stores' service and products surpass expectations while providing the ultimate customer experience. Store concepts include compressed natural gas, electric vehicle charging stations, drive-thrus and dog parks.

Orthodontic Associates, which has Oklahoma City and Edmond locations, provides happy, healthy smiles to kids and adults using the highest quality, modern orthodontic treatments available including, invisalign treatment, modern braces, bite correction, virtual house calls and more.

PaceButler Corporation buys and resells old and unused cell phones. Since opening in 1987, it's donated more



Ross Group Construction Corporation employees. (PROVIDED)



OnCue, headquartered in Stillwater, employs 1,164 employees at 84 Oklahoma convenience stores. (PROVIDED)

than 1.3 million books to prisons, homeless shelters, schools, and more.

Panda Restaurant Group, parent company of Panda Express, Panda Inn, and Hibachi-San, delivers exceptional Asian dining experiences while building an organization where people are inspired to better their lives. The company is family-owned with about 2,200 locations worldwide and more than 40,000 employees.

Paycom Software Inc.'s innovative, cloud-based software provides

businesses with human capital management technology that effectively manages the complete employment life cycle, from recruitment to retirement. Its technology is based on a core system of record maintained within a single database, providing the functionality and analytics that businesses need.

Phillips Murrah PC is proud to have grown from a four-lawyer startup into one of the largest full-service law firms in Oklahoma. Individuals, local companies and Fortune 500 corporations depend on us

to deliver valuable, practical solutions that fit specific needs.

Positive Tomorrows, since 1989, has provided stability and a quality education to children of families experiencing homelessness.

Presort First Class is a locally owned turn-key graphic design, print marketing and direct mail marketing agency in Oklahoma City to drive customers' sales and secure repeat business.

Regent Bank, based in Tulsa, recently paid its

108 employees a bonus for reaching a financial goal. The bank provides funding for growth, acquisitions, equipment loans, operating lines of credit, commercial real estate, SBA, USDA and more.

Rich & Cartmill Insurance & Bonds, founded in 1922, is one of the largest, privately held Trusted Choice® independent agencies in the country.

Ross Group Construction Corp. is a general contractor for construction, engineering services, design build projects and commercial business development. Clients include the military and energy companies.

Russell-Murray Hospice Inc. cares for terminally ill patients with life expectancies of six months or fewer, in their private homes, nursing homes, assisted living centers or hospitals.

Santa Fe South Schools is a fully accredited public charter school district serving students from pre-K through 12th grades. Operational since 2001, SFS predominantly serves students from the Oklahoma City Public School District attendance area. With 3,500 enrolled students, it's the largest comprehensive charter school in the state and one of the largest in the region.

Saxum is a full-service integrated marketing communications agency with offerings in advertising, public relations and digital areas of expertise.

Sherwood Companies is a family-owned and operated heavy highway and industrial contractor with nearly nine decades working in construction across

See CONTENDERS, T16

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Jeffrey P. Orlowski
President & Chief Executive Officer
Winner of the Leadership Award
Among Midsize Companies

CONTENDERS

From Page T15

Oklahoma, Kansas and Colorado.

St. Mary's Regional Medical Center has served the healthcare needs of northwest Oklahoma for more than 100 years. The Oklahoma State Department of Health recognized the hospital with an Award of Excellence and a designation as an Oklahoma Certified Healthy Business.

Stan Johnson Company is one of the nation's leading commercial real estate brokerage and advisory firms that focuses on single-tenant net lease transactions involving retail, office, industrial, medical and sale-lease-back properties.

Standley Systems LLC, which was founded in 1934 as the Fred Standley Typewriter Company in Chickasha, has remained on the forefront of office technology, from information technology and printing solutions, while maintaining a personal touch. The family-owned, fourth-generation company serves all 77 counties.

The Haskell Company architecture, engineering and construction firm is a global network of experts providing integrated design, engineering, construction and professional services to clients and communities.

TBS Factoring Service makes trucking easier with technology and services to help drivers get established, stay compliant, find loads and get paid faster. Based in Oklahoma City, the TBS family of companies — which includes Truckers Bookkeeping Service, TBS Factoring Service and Elite Dispatch — has over 50 years experience serving motor carriers with a



Timberlake Construction employees volunteer at Charles Haskell Elementary. (PROVIDED)

wide range of services to handle everything but the driving.

Timberlake Construction serves a variety of clients covering a diverse range of sectors and industries, including civic and municipal, corporate, educational, healthcare, hospitality and multi-family, industrial, public safety and law enforcement, retail, spiritual, and sports and entertainment.

US Cellular is the fifth-largest full-service wireless carrier in the United States. The Chicago-based carrier offers coverage where the other carriers don't and a wide range of communication services that enhance consumers' lives, increase the competitiveness of local businesses and improve the efficiency of government operations.

The company's offerings include postpaid and no-contract service; voice, data and messaging, mobile Internet and international calling. U.S. Cellular has a strong lineup of phones, tablets and connected devices from Apple, Samsung Electronics, LG Electronics and others.

Valiant Artificial Lift Solutions provides artificial lift solutions that operators need to keep their operations up and running.

Webeo Industries Inc., founded in 1969 and headquartered in Sand Springs, manufactures high-quality carbon, stainless steel, and other high alloy specialty tubing products. The company employs more than 1,000 at its 2 million-square-foot facility.



Stan Johnson Co. David Clary, Teresa Lovely, and Lindsey Vedros volunteer at SJC's annual day of service. (PROVIDED)

World Acceptance Corporation, founded in 1962, is a people-focused finance company that

provides personal installment loan solutions and personal tax preparation and filing services to more than 1 million customers each year. Headquartered in Greenville, South Carolina, the company operates more than 1,200 community-based World Finance branches across 16 states.

The company primarily serves a segment of the population that does not have ready access to credit. In its last fiscal year, the company helped more than 225,000 people improve their credit score out of subprime and deep subprime.

Yukon Public Schools empowers learners to be self-sustaining, successful contributors to life and the global community.



Panda Restaurant Group, headquartered in California, boasts 27 locations in Oklahoma. (PROVIDED)



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"Gateway First Bank has a remarkable culture, because we have terrific people and we care about our clients. In the last year, we have undergone a major transformation into a bank which brings us tremendous growth potential and greater responsibility to help our customers. We have taken our passion for strengthening families through homeownership to the next level — strengthening their financial health."

Scott Gesell, CEO, Gateway First Bank




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Interesting facts about this year's Top Workplaces

By Paula Burkes
For The Oklahoman

Accenture

By year-end, Accenture will have built 10 new innovation hubs in key cities, invested \$1.4 billion in training to ensure its people have leading-edge capabilities and created 15,000 highly skilled new jobs.

Air Assurance Company

Recently recognized by the Broken Arrow Chamber of Commerce as Broken Arrow's best business, Air Assurance has been awarded training awards from the National Comfort Institute and the Air Conditioning Contractors Association.

APMEX

Scott Thomas semi-unintentionally founded this billion-dollar company, while liquidating his grandfather's coin inventory. APMEX is located in the old Federal Reserve Building and still uses its original vault doors.

Ben E. Keith Company

Ben E. Keith is the eighth largest food service distributor in the U.S. The OK Division is the second largest division of Ben E. Keith Foods, and never has laid off employees, choosing instead to manage head count via attrition.

BKD CPAs & Advisors

The firm has an OK Employee Engagement Council that suggests policy and program improvements. Initiatives include a Fitbit wellness program, coworker recognition awards, an anonymous feedback channel and more.

Bob Mills Furniture

Bob Mills Furniture opened its doors for business on July 3, 1971. Some of its 300-plus employees have worked for the company for more than



An FAA Air Traffic Control student receives instruction in a radar lab at the FAA Academy in Oklahoma City. [PROVIDED]

25 years.

Brainerd Chemical Company Inc.

This privately held, family-owned chemical distributor serves 3,000 customers across 40 states. It's the largest producer of peracetic acid in the U.S. and the largest producer of citric acid and isopropyl alcohol in Oklahoma.

C. I. Boyd Company Inc.

More than 30% of employees have a tenure of 10 years or greater. It recognizes service anniversaries at its annual Christmas party, where guests enjoy steaks, presents, Santa, singing and a 20-foot Christmas tree.

CACI

Each year, the Casualty Corporation of America Inc. assembles holiday gift baskets filled with "Made in Oklahoma" products for its independent agents across Oklahoma, to show CACI's appreciation for keeping Oklahoma's insurance business in Oklahoma.

Central Technology Center

The center currently boasts an average entry-level annual salary for working graduates of \$27,360, with 95% placement for students entering the workforce or continuing their education. The center creates an annual economic impact of \$31.9 million.

CMS Willowbrook Inc.

Founded in 1974, this family-owned, Chickasha-based construction company has completed more than 1,300 projects across Oklahoma. Clients include city, state and county governments; universities; K-12 schools; and commercial developers across multiple industries.

Ditch Witch of Oklahoma

Ditch Witch of Oklahoma was the first Ditch Witch dealer worldwide.

The Bridwell family bought the dealership in 1976 and brings more than three generations and 50 years of experience to the industry.

Edmond Public Schools

Edmond Public Schools is the largest full-time employer in Edmond.

EOG Resources

EOG is one of 19 Fortune 500 companies headquartered in Houston, and was named a 2019 Top Workplace in Oklahoma, Houston, San Antonio and New Mexico.

Epic Charter Schools

Epic is estimated to be the third-largest public school system in Oklahoma as of this 2019-2020 school year. It's the only public school in Oklahoma that uses its state funding to give each student a \$1,000 learning fund, which can be used for academic materials, as well as extracurricular materials and costs.

FAA Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center

The center is the second-largest employer in Oklahoma City and the fourth-largest employer in the state, with an annual economic impact of over

\$1.65 billion. In 2021, the center will celebrate 75 years of excellence, with no plans to rest on its laurels as aviation and aerospace technology is advancing faster than ever before.

First United

First United is transforming its lobbies, with coffee bars, tech tables, learning lounges and community learning centers to be more inviting, innovative and collaborative.

GableGotwals

Several of the firm's attorneys are certified by the Society of Human Resource Management, which adds unique value to their counsel. The firm also boasts several attorneys who previously worked as in-house counsel.

Garver

Since 2015, Garver has supported more than 300 organizations, contributed more than \$800,000, and volunteered more than 2,600 hours through GarverGives, its corporate-giving arm.

Gateway First Bank

Gateway Mortgage Group services mortgage loans totaling more than \$16 billion for more than 100,000 customers. It funds nearly 2,000 new loans a month. The company has recently been recognized as an eight-time honoree on the Inc. 5000 List.

Great Plains Bank

During the depression of the 1930s, Great Plains (then the First State Bank and Trust Company of Hollis) was given permission to remain open, and is among very few banks nationwide to claim this privilege.

Kindful Hospice

Kindful is the fastest growing hospice in Oklahoma.

See FACTS, T18

OKLAHOMA
Mental Health & Substance Abuse

TOP WORKPLACES 2020

THE OKLAHOMAN

PROUD TO BE NAMED A **TOP WORKPLACE** IN OKLAHOMA

1 in 4 Oklahomans experiences mental health and addiction issues each year. Through treatment, support services, and sharing our personal stories of recovery and well-being, we're able to inspire change. It's our employees living our mission that makes ODMHSAS a Top Workplace in Oklahoma.

Thank you to all of our ODMHSAS team members!



Artists rendition of acrylic standoff pictured here

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OKLAHOMAN LOCALIQ

FACTS

From Page T17

Lifeshare Transplant Donor Services Of Oklahoma Inc.

Last year, LifeShare coordinated the donation of lifesaving organs from 197 donors whose generous gifts saved 516 lives.

Melton Truck Lines Inc.

Melton has been a leader in the flatbed transportation industry for more than 60 years.

Meridian Technology Center

Meridian provides tuition-free education for in-district high school students; \$3 per credit hour for district adults — a low or no-cost, focused education.

OnCue Marketing LLC

OnCue employs more than 1,000 Oklahomans at 75 locations. The company built its first drive-thru in 1971, four years before McDonald's began building them. In addition to 20 drive-thrus, OnCue boasts six dog parks and has been lauded for its landscaping initiatives.

Orthodontic Associates

The company is the first in Oklahoma to offer a virtual house-call technology for Invisalign patients, using smartphones for remote monitoring.

Panda Restaurant Group

The family-owned company opened in 1973 as a fine-dining restaurant, and opened its first Panda Express in the Glendale Galleria in 1983. The restaurant originated orange chicken.

Paycom Software Inc.

Founded in 1998, Paycom once was a private company, but became public in April of 2014 with its shares opening for trade on the New York Stock Exchange under the ticker symbol PAYC. In 2016, Paycom was lauded with the likes of Twitter, Apple and Southwest



St. Mary's Regional Medical Center caregivers mask up. (PROVIDED)

Airlines as one of the best large companies for which to work. Most recently, Paycom was recognized as one of Achievers 50 Most Engaged Workplaces, which honors businesses that display leadership and innovation in engaging their workforce.

Phillips Murrah P.C.

Over the past 30 years, the firm's attorneys have been involved in nearly every major initiative that has helped transform Oklahoma City from a Midwestern metropolitan upstart to the thriving business center that it is today. From Urban renewal in the '80s to post-century Bricktown and back again with sustainability and historic preservation projects, the firm has been a part of the city's growth and success.

Positive Tomorrows

The school is among a handful nationwide who work only with homeless children, providing intensive case management for families, parental support groups, and robust after-school and day camp programs.

Presort First Class

Presort First Class had humble beginnings and first began in the owner's garage. It is well-known for our fleet of trucks that traverse the Oklahoma City metro area. The company sorts more than 65 million pieces of mail per year. The company prints more than 26 million sheets per year.

Russell-Murray Hospice Inc.

The hospice provides care to terminally ill patients, whether or not they have a payment source.

Santa Fe South Schools Inc.

The schools offer full services for English-language learners and students who are on individualized education plans, as well as those with other special needs. Comprehensive tutoring and after-school programs offer additional opportunities for students to meet academic goals.

Saxum

A former University of Oklahoma basketball star, CEO Renzi Stone founded Saxum 17 years ago when he was 25 years old. He named

his company using the Latin word "saxum," meaning large stone. Renzi is 6 feet, 10 inches tall.

Stability Cannabis

The company has allocated \$20,000 in grants to local nonprofits through StabilityGives, its community and nonprofit support arm.

Standley Systems LLC

Standley Systems has been a family-owned leader in business technology across Oklahoma for four generations. History and family lie at the heart of Standley Systems' 85-year success. Standley hires Oklahoma graduates, keeps its money in local banks and invests in the communities it serves.

TBS Factoring Service

In 2017, TBS launched a weekly talk show on Facebook Live, called the "Truck Boss Show" with just an iPhone and focusing on segments within the transportation industry. Over the past two years, the show has been refined both in studio and out and now conducts field reports

from several states as the hosts dive into issues facing independent drivers. The team hosts live from events throughout the year, such as the Mid-America Trucking Show, The Great American Trucking Show, and even Big Rig races around the country. Currently, the show has 100,000 weekly subscribers.

Timberlake Construction

Timberlake Construction is the first and only construction company in Oklahoma to achieve VPP Mobile Workforce Star status, an elite group consisting of approximately 30 companies nationwide.

US Cellular

Founded in 1983, U.S. Cellular has approximately 6,300 associates and serves nearly 5 million customers in 23 states across the United States. The cellular provider has the Highest Wireless Network Quality Performance in the North Central Region, according to the J.D. Power 2017 U.S. Wireless Network Quality Performance Study, and 99% of customers have access to 4G LTE speeds.

Valiant Artificial Lift Solutions

At Valiant, service is driven by safety. The company displays unique employee-authored safety slogans in each of its facilities.

Webeo Industries Inc.

Nearly 400 of Webeo's employees have 10 years' service or more. Every year, Webeo ships enough tubing to circle the globe — twice.

World Acceptance Corporation

World recently moved its headquarters to Greenville, South Carolina, and has more than one million active customers.

Yukon Public Schools

The district serves nearly 9,000 students and is in the midst of a \$40 billion bond project, which will bring the opening of a new intermediate school this year.



APMEX.com

At APMEX, we know we would not be one of the Best Places to Work in Oklahoma without the tireless efforts of our dedicated employees.



TOP WORK PLACES 2020

APMEX.com/Careers

THE OKLAHOMAN



APMEC staff members catch the holiday spirit. [SUBMITTED PHOTO]

I love my job because ...



Sherwood Companies family-owned construction company operates in Oklahoma, Kansas and Colorado. [SUBMITTED PHOTO]

Accenture

"I work with diverse and intelligent people."

Addison Group

"I have a great boss who is hands-on in training and development of me and my teammates."

Sherwood Companies

"I'm not misled with broken promises."

Air Assurance Company

"I have a great support system - from the owners to the warehouse department."

APMEC

"I feel I am part of something

growing and moving in a forward direction, which challenges me continually."

Aviation Training Consulting LLC

"I am able to contribute to meaning projects, while being able to work from my home office."

BKD CPAs & Advisors

"I am learning something new almost every day and it challenges me."

Bob Mills Furniture

"I feel respected and listened to."

Brainherd Chemical Co. Inc.

"Every day is different and I feel challenged."

C L Boyd Company Inc.

"I trust the executive team to always do the right things and do things the right way."

OKIE811

"I am part of an organization that truly cares about people and the community around them."

CACI

"I am able to help my country."

Casualty Corporation of America Inc.

"I feel valued and appreciated."

CEC

"Because after almost eight years, I still wake up everyday happy about my job."

Central Technology Center

"They provide fair pay and are family-oriented."

City of Mustang

"I am making a difference in the community that I love."



Great Plains Banks supports its local schools. [SUBMITTED PHOTO]

Great Plains Bank

"I am allowed to do my job and not be micro-managed."

Claims Management Resources

"I am always stretched to learn."

CMS Willowbrook Inc.

"I am given enough room to run my jobs the way I'd like, but also direction to make sure I'm doing it efficiently."

CompSource Mutual Insurance Co.

"Everyone's voice is heard."

Cooper Auto Group

"I'm free to be myself."

Cornerstone Home Lending

"I get to help customers with their biggest life purchase/dreams coming true."

Ditch Witch of Oklahoma

"I have freedom to grow others and myself."

Eastern Oklahoma County Technology Center

"I can work at my own fast pace."

Edmond Public Schools

"I get to help children - not only with their work, but also with their social skills."

EOG Resources

"From Houston's upper management to my coworkers, I feel EOG cares about me and my family."

EPIC Charter Schools

"I have a huge network of support."

FAA Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center

"Classes are available to further my learning, and managers have an open-door policy."

First United

"First United Bank respects us, our families and our beliefs regardless of gender or ethnicity."

GableGotwals

"... of the excellent lawyers I work with, the devoted and genuinely engaged support staff, the mix of great clients."

Garver

"I am never afraid to 'mess up' because I know my team and supervisor have my back."

Gateway First Bank

"Its culture; it's rare to find a financial services organization that truly focuses on family and community."

Homes by Taber

"I feel valued and not like I'm just another number."

Kindful Hospice

"I get to live out my life's passion."

LifeShare Transplant Donor Services of Oklahoma Inc.

"I am able to wake up every day knowing that I can make a difference in someone's life."

Locke Supply Co.

"... its flexibility and benefits."

MacArthur Associated Consultants

"... of the overall culture of being positive and making things fun."

Melton Truck Lines Inc.

"Everyone treats you like extended family."

Meridian Technology Center

"I get to grow as an instructor with continuing education, so I can be the very best for my students."

MY Consulting Group

"The company has high moral values and integrity."

Noble Research Institute

"My supervisors are always conscious of my workload and never require me to over-exert myself."

Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

"... of our mission and the hard work done to achieve it."

THANK YOU!

To our amazing staff, you are the reason we have a great culture and are growing during a pandemic.

- Amber Mitchell, CEO



myconsultinggroup.com/#join-the-mycg-team

We are honored to be voted as one of the **TOP PLACES TO WORK IN OKLAHOMA** by our employees!

CMR

Claims Management Resources

CMRclaims.com

TOP WORK PLACES 2020

Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation

"I am free to do high-level science without the red tape and ridiculous expectations that hold people back at most universities."

Oklahoma Water Resources Board

"I am able to be a part of something meaningful, make a positive contribution to society, am appreciated for my opinion and the work I produce, and am respected as a person."

Oklahoma Wesleyan University

"I get to share Christ through the things that I love."

OnCue Marketing LLC

"All the workers are chill and friendly, and you get to meet new people every day."

PaceButler Corporation

"... of the positive atmosphere and how the employees treat each other."

Panda Restaurant Group

"It gives me financial freedom and stability."

Paycom Software Inc.

"As a single parent, Paycom allows me to have a balanced home and work life."

Phillips Murrah PC

"I feel like I am an integral part of the team and my opinions matter."

Positive Tomorrows

"I have access to resources, supply, and support that I do not feel I would have in many other teaching environments."

Orthodontic Associates

"We help kids and adults feel better about themselves by gaining the confidence from an improved smile!"



Oklahoma Health Care Authority became the single state Medicaid agency in 1995. (SUBMITTED PHOTO)

Presort First Class

"I enjoy fresh challenges."

Regent Bank

"It's exciting to be a part of a growing organization."

Rich & Carlmill Insurance

"We have lots of perks, including a 401K match, health care and PTO (paid time off)."

Ross Group Construction Corporation

"I am always encouraged to learn more and take as much initiative as I feel comfortable with."

Russell-Murray Hospice Inc.

"We take care of patients regardless of income."

Santa Fe South Schools Inc.

"Everyone works together."

Saxum

"I get to have fun doing something that I'm good at with others who are really good at their jobs, too."

Oklahoma Health Care Authority
"... of the camaraderie I share with my co-workers."



TBS Factoring Service sponsored a Sandwiches for Semis event in March, as a thank-you to truck drivers who continue to deliver essential goods during the pandemic. (SUBMITTED PHOTO)

St. Mary's Regional Medical Center

"I can collaborate with management and front-line staff well."

Stan Johnson Company

"I am encouraged to provide feedback on our deals and clients."

Standley Systems LLC

"I have the opportunity

to guide my team to grow their skills and realize their potentials."

TEAM Professional Cos.

"My roles/responsibilities fit my specific skill-set perfectly."

The Haskell Company

"... my fellow employees."

Timberlake Construction

"There's infinite opportunity."

US Cellular

"Actions match the words."

Valiant Artificial Lift Solutions

"I am able to contribute in different ways and I feel needed."

Webco Industries Inc.

"I am able to give 100% at work, be engaged and not have to sacrifice family to be successful at this company."

World Acceptance Corp.

"I am challenged on a daily basis to grow and evolve on a professional and personal level."

TBS Factoring Service

"I absolutely love building rapport with agents and agencies and helping them win business, as well as TBS."

Yukon Public Schools

"I feel a part of the greater cause, namely, education of our future adults."

Compiled by Paula Burkes

TOP WORK PLACES 2020
THE OKLAHOMAN

To the entire IMMY team who make saving lives possible

THANK YOU

IMMY
SAVING LIVES
ONE DIAGNOSTIC AT A TIME

Employees choose Top Workplaces through survey

By Bob Helbig
Energage

Who determines Top Workplaces? The best judges: the employees who work there.

For the eighth year, The Oklahoman has partnered with Philadelphia-based Energage to rank the Top Workplaces in Oklahoma. The process is based on a scientific survey of employees who rate their workplace culture. It also gives company insights about what makes them unique.

"In times of great change, it is more important than ever to maintain a connection among employees," said Eric Rubino, Energage CEO. "When you give your employees a voice, you come together to navigate challenges and shape your path forward based on real-time insights into what works

"In times of great change, it is more important than ever to maintain a connection among employees. When you give your employees a voice, you come together to navigate challenges and shape your path forward based on real-time insights into what works best for your organization."

Eric Rubino, Energage CEO

best for your organization."

The process began in June, when The Oklahoman began news coverage and promotions welcoming people to nominate companies as Top Workplaces. Energage also reached out to companies in the state. Throughout the process, 1,715 employers in the state were invited to have their employees take the survey. Any organization was eligible to participate, provided it had at least 35 employees in the state. Employers could be public, private, nonprofit

or governmental. There is no cost to enter the Top Workplaces program.

Combined, the companies surveyed in 2020 employed 34,884 people in the state. Of those employees who received questionnaires, 22,586 responded, either on paper or online. For this year's winners list, 76 employers earned recognition as Top Workplaces and were ranked based on their employee survey feedback.

The employee engagement survey of 24 questions gathers responses regarding issues relating to workplace

culture:

- Alignment – where the company is headed, its values, cooperation, effective meetings.
 - Coaching – managers care about concerns, are helpful, encourage employee development.
 - Connection – employees feel appreciated, work is meaningful, working at full potential, clued in to each other.
 - Engagement – productivity, retention, recruiting.
 - Leadership – confidence in company leaders.
 - Performance – execution, open-mindedness, innovation, clued-in leadership.
 - The Basics – pay, benefits, flexibility, training, expectations.
- Employers that score high enough are recognized as Top

Workplaces. Employers are categorized by size, and they are ranked within those size groups, to accurately compare results. Energage also determines special award winners based on standout scores on specific survey topics.

Did you look over the list and wonder why a particular company was not on it? It might be because it chose not to participate, or because it did not score well enough in the survey process. Energage occasionally disqualifies employers based on questionable results detected through statistical tests it runs to ensure organizations are accurately administering the survey.

Want your organization to participate in the 2021 program? Just go to oklahoman.com/nominate to submit a nomination.

Why appreciation in the workplace matters

By Doug Claffey
Energage

When it comes to feeling appreciated at work, what matters most to employees? If you answered "pay," think again. Research shows pay is low on the list.

Energage surveyed more than 22 million employees across 66,000 organizations over the past 14 years. We've learned that what matters to employees – what truly motivates them – is feeling appreciated. Across all U.S. sectors and populations, appreciation ranks as one of the most important workplace culture drivers.

Our 2020 survey of employees in Oklahoma found that appreciation rates third in importance, topped only by whether employees feel their organization is

headed in the right direction, and whether they feel they are working at their full potential.

It's important to note there is no definition for appreciation in our survey. We don't tell employees how – or in what ways – they should gauge their feelings about it. They use their own definition, and even more, employees know it when they feel it. And they can also readily distinguish between what's authentic and what's simply lip service.

Just as there is no single definition of how employees should feel appreciated, there is no single way for organizations to express it. Some use reward and recognition systems. This form of appreciation tends to focus on outcomes, and it's often linked to financial

Our 2020 survey of employees in Oklahoma found that appreciation rates third in importance, topped only by whether employees feel their organization is headed in the right direction, and whether they feel they are working at their full potential.

awards. Other recognition systems are tied to organizational events, such as service anniversaries.

The simplest and sometimes the most effective form of appreciation is giving positive feedback or praise. "Thank you for your effort" or "You're doing a really good job" goes a long way, whether delivered in person, electronically or in a handwritten note.

Within an organization are different types of appreciation, because each has a unique message and

meaning:

- Peer to peer: Co-workers thank others either within or outside their own team. This is especially important when teams are geographically dispersed or don't see each other regularly.
- Manager to employee: Managers are most familiar with their employees' roles. Employees like to know their manager understands and values their contributions.
- Senior leadership: This level is typically more general, relating to group efforts. But senior

leaders can also highlight extraordinary effort. Above all, it demonstrates they see and recognize individual and team contributions.

Appreciation matters because it goes a long way with employees to improve motivation, job satisfaction, self-esteem and retention. Cultivating a culture of appreciation helps employees feel good about the work they do, and it's the glue that holds teams together.

Doug Claffey is founder and chief strategy officer of Energage, a Philadelphia-based employee survey firm that surveyed more than 2 million employees at more than 7,000 organizations in the past year. Energage is The Oklahoman's survey partner for Top Workplaces.

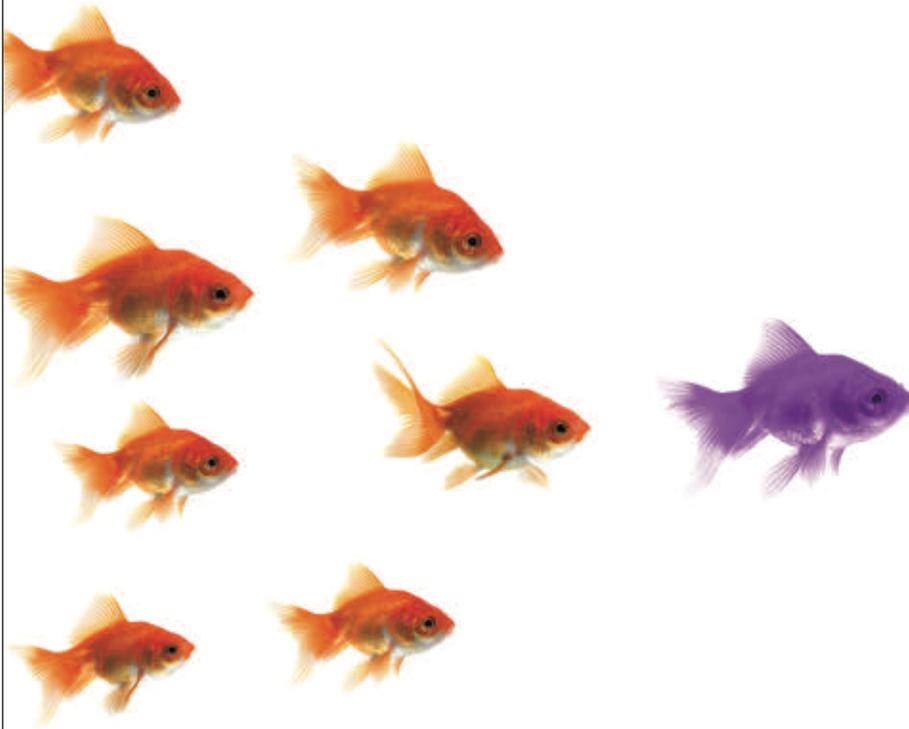


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